



How can Long-Term Care Communities Reduce Viral Respiratory Infections During an Outbreak or a Pandemic?

Long-term care (LTC) communities for adults with disabilities and older adults can adopt combinations of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to prevent, slow, or stop the spread of viral respiratory infections during an outbreak or a pandemic. NPIs may be directed to residents, staff, and visitors and applied at individual, community, and environmental levels.

- **Individual** level NPIs may include using personal protective equipment, such as gloves and masks, proper hand hygiene, and staff not coming to work when sick.
- **Community** level NPIs may include testing and screening, physical distancing, visitor restriction, and resident admission or transfer restriction.
- **Environmental** level NPIs may include cleaning and disinfecting and improving ventilation.

Why is This Important?

Older adults and LTC community residents are at higher risk for severe illness and outcomes from respiratory infections.

- LTC community residents make up less than 1% of the U.S. population but accounted for more than 23% of all COVID-19 deaths as of January 2022.

Major Findings

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommends NPIs in LTC communities to decrease viral respiratory infection incidence among LTC community residents and staff.

- The recommendation is based on evidence from a systematic review of 42 studies. Across the studies, the programs reduced viral infection in residents and staff by 46%.
- LTC communities in the included studies used different combinations of NPIs based on their needs and resources and a reduction in infection was observed across these combinations. Based on the included studies, the review team could not determine which specific NPI or combination of NPIs was the most effective.
- The finding is mostly based on responses to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, but can be applied to infections caused by other respiratory viruses.

Implementation Resources

- [CDC: Viral Respiratory Pathogens Toolkit for Nursing Homes](#): Strategies to help prepare for and respond to signs or symptoms of a respiratory viral infection among nursing home residents or healthcare personnel.
- [AHRQ: A Unit Guide to Infection Prevention for Long-Term Care Staff](#): Overview of infections and infection prevention in LTC communities, a review of standard precautions and ways to implement transmission-based precautions, with a focus on influenza.
- [American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living: Long-term Care Quick Start Guide: Preparing for Respiratory Virus Season](#): Guidance and recommendations for prevention and management, including the CDC Toolkit

Learn More

Read the [complete summary of the systematic review](#), access implementation resources, and find out more about public health emergency preparedness and response.

Established in 1996 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) is an independent, nonfederal panel of public health and prevention experts whose members are appointed by the director of CDC. CPSTF provides information for a wide range of decision makers on programs, services, and other interventions aimed at improving population health. Although CDC provides administrative, scientific, and technical support for CPSTF, the recommendations developed are those of CPSTF and do not undergo review or approval by CDC. Find more information at www.thecommunityguide.org.